

# Operation Ice Bridge – Site Brief



Thule Air Base

ESPO

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## Theater/Country Clearance

Greenland officially belongs to Denmark who has over-site on the facilities run primarily by the United States Air Force. Country clearance through the Danish authorities is required for entrance into Greenland. Each individual, expecting to enter Thule, will be required to supply information, including your SSN, Passport #, date of birth, etc. to obtain a "Theater Tracking Clearance Sheet". Three sets of official government orders are required. ESPO has supplied surrogate travel orders, in the past, for non-governmental team members. Each team member will be required submit one set of orders to the AMC desk at BWI airport prior to departure to Thule and another set is required upon arrival. Departure from Thule will also require a set of orders to board the ATI contract aircraft. Entry documents are furnished by and submitted to the US Air Force at Thule, no later than, 30 days prior to your scheduled arrival in country. A valid personal passport (and sometimes depending your country of origin a visa) is also required for travel to Greenland.

## Getting There

Aside from flying on the NASA C-130, there are very limited flights to Thule. The regular once a week flight is on board the ATI contract Boeing 757 ("Rotator"), a combination passenger and cargo aircraft. The Rotator counter is the AMC check-in counter (personnel are wearing military uniforms.) The AMC counter is located on the second floor of the International Terminal at the Baltimore International Airport (BWI). This flight departs BWI at 2:00am on Thursdays with check in is between 8:00pm and midnight on Wednesdays. The return flight departs Thule at 7:00am arrives to BWI at 12:00pm (noon) on Fridays. There are 32 available seats per flight, however depending on Thule activities these seats can fill quickly, ensure that reservations are made with ample time to secure a seat when needed. The cost is ~\$1278.00 each way. Civil Servants payment for the flights can be made via credit card at the BWI counter and CASH ONLY at the Thule counter (no credit card machine at Thule.) The flights have to be purchased separately (purchasing a round trip ticket at BWI is not possible.) Contractors only: provide in advance complete billing POC information to ESPO (company's billing POC, billing address, phone number, etc.) This information will be added to your travel orders and take care of the payment for the return flight. Civil servants, bring enough cash to pay for the return trip. Remember that THERE ARE NO ATMs in Thule. ALL rotator flight reservations and coordination must be made through ESPO.



Figure 1: Thule Air Base (76° 32' N, 68° 50' W) and the North Star Bay. Thule is located 695 miles from the Arctic Circle, 947 miles from the North Pole.

## Arriving in Thule Air Base

### Arriving from Wallops Flight Facility (onboard the NASA C-130):

1. Upon arrival to Thule, the C-130 will be parked outside Hangar #8. A Danish immigration representative will collect passengers' and crew's passports, verify personnel theater clearances, stamp and return passports. Subsequently, the C-130 will be towed into the hangar.
2. Collect your baggage and head to the North Star Inn (building 100) to check in. You can either call for a taxi from one of the wall-phones, or exit the hangar (towards the rear of the building) and walk to the North Star Inn (approximately 200 meters from the hangar.) Taxies are free and arrive from 5 – 10min after you call.

### Arriving in the from BWI (on board the ATI rotator Boeing 757 ("Rotator")):

1. The ATI rotator will park in front of the Thule Airport terminal building. Passengers disembark and walk across the tarmac to the terminal. Once inside the terminal you will provide your passport to the local agent and collect your baggage. If this is your first time to Thule you should have someone from your team meet you when you arrive.
2. After collecting your documents and baggage head to the North Star Inn (building 100) to check in. You can either call for a taxi from one of the wall-phones, or walk to the North Star Inn (approximately 300 meters from the terminal.) Taxies are free and arrive from 5 to 10 minutes after you call.



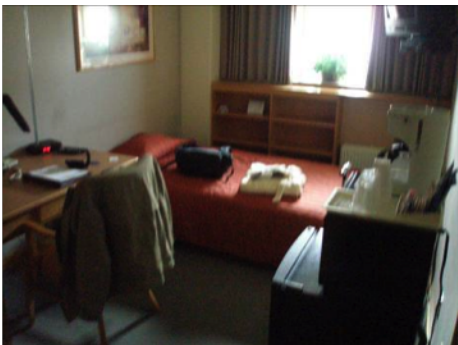
### Lodging

1. North Star Inn (Bldg 100): This is the only hotel type lodging accommodation in the air base. Dormitories may also be available for long-term stays. The North Star Inn has 100 individual rooms; shared bathrooms are located on every floor and on each side of the building. The cost is approximately \$34.75/night.

2. The North Star accommodations include TV, microwave, small refrigerator, and limited Internet capabilities. ESPO will provide its own Internet connection for ARISE personnel. User name and login information will be provided upon your arrival.

3. ESPO will provide the North Star Inn with your reservation information based on the information you provided on the ESPO database. Please ensure that the information is accurate and up-to-date. Proceed to the front desk upon arrival to provide payment information.

4. Washer and driers are located in the community bathrooms on each floor.



### Dining

1. The Dundas Buffet Restaurant (chow hall) is located

adjacent to the North Star Inn.

2. The method of payment at the Dundas buffet is by prepaid meal cards. The North Star Inn will provide you with meal cards to which you must add money at the entrance to the buffet.
3. Meal prices are in the USD \$5 range.
4. Meals are also available at the Top Of the World (TOW) Club (restaurant/bar) after regular dinner hours.

## Hangars



Thule has several large hangars. ESPO has requested 1 of the larger hangars, Hangar #8. Office space is limited but located internal to the hangar. Overflow of office needs can be accommodated on the hangar floor. ESPO will

provide wireless internet capabilities for the hangar. Login information will be provided by ESPO upon arrival.

## Meeting spaces

There is additional meeting space in the North Star Inn, the common Day-Room (2nd floor.) Additional small meeting rooms are located on each floor of the hotel at the end of the corridors.

## Cell Phones

GSM tri or quad band phones should be capable of attaining a cell phone signal (roaming through TELEGL, so careful of charges.).

## Shopping

A military store (AAFES Thule Exchange or BX) is available. This small store contains a variety of Danish and American food items, personal care items, cleaning and laundry supplies, office products, and a few electronics and video items. A barbershop is also located in the same BX. Thule airbase also offers a very nice a fitness facility and a bowling center.

## Transportation

Taxi services are free, quick and easy to/from anywhere on the base, 24 hrs/day. Walking to from the chow hall to the hangars and to the hotel is the only real option with taxi service always available when very cold. Distance between anywhere on the airfield is within ½ mile.

## Weather

Temperature in Thule ranges from -40F in the coldest months to 60F in the summer. The coldest weather hits at the same time as the sun starts coming up over the horizon (late February to early March). In late April, the sun remains above the horizon 24 hrs. Winds can range from 30 to 100 knots during the arctic winters.

Arctic winter storms are divided into these classifications: Storm Normal, Storm Alpha, Storm Bravo, Storm Charlie, and Storm Delta. Storm Delta represents the most serious threat to life and property. Two factors (visibility and temperature) are assessed to determine the applicable storm conditions. When any two of these three factors are present, the appropriate storm condition is declared.

- Storm Condition Normal - Business as usual.
- Storm Condition Alpha - Initial warning of a potential Arctic winter storm. No danger exists at this point; however, all personnel should prepare for Storm Conditions.
- Storm Condition Bravo - All pedestrian traffic will use the buddy system (two or more people traveling together). All personnel must stay on approved roads. If you are traveling alone in a vehicle, it must have a comm radio or use the buddy system.
- Storm Condition Charlie - All non-essential base facilities close. Return to quarters. Pedestrian traffic is prohibited. Call the base taxi or use the base shuttle bus service if dedicated vehicles are not available.
- Storm Condition Delta - All personnel are restricted to the buildings in which they are located at the time a Storm Delta is declared. Absolutely no pedestrian or vehicular travel is permitted. Only emergency vehicles will operate during this condition and only at the direction of the Base Commander.

All year long, Thule weather is like weather in many northern states, unpredictable. It can rain, sleet, snow, and be very sunny and warm all in one 24-hour period. Always be prepared, and expect the unexpected. For your protection, storm shelters (phase sheds) are located at short intervals along the roads leading to off-base worksite locations. Each shelter is heated and stocked with emergency food, water, bedding, and a telephone. They are for use by anyone caught in a sudden storm condition. Remember, these shelters are for emergency use only!!!

Extreme Cold Weather Gear – While at Thule you will have to supply your own cold weather gear. Expect temperatures to reach -30 degrees and very windy. A proper jacket, foot wear, gloves, hat, long underwear, etc is required. The NASA C-130 will have a supply of cold weather gear and provisions for each person flying. This gear will stay on the aircraft and will not be available for personal use other than in the event of an emergency. Wind and cold safety – You may experience some cold and windy days where the base will completely close and you are confined to the hotel until the extreme weather passes the area. Snacks and drinks can be purchased at the BX. Do not venture outside in “white out” conditions. You can easily get lost and suffer injury and death even going from the hotel to the chow hall. **Use common sense.**



During the summer months mosquitos present a significant problem. If you need to spend significant time outside is recommended to use mosquito repellant and/or mosquito nets. Consider packing some mosquito repellant. This can be purchased at the local store (the Exchange) however, they could (have had in the past) run out of it.

### **Leisure Activities in Thule**

- Bowling Center (Bldg 608)
- Community Activities Center (Library, game rooms, outdoor recreation, tours, special events, etc. Located in Bldg 362)
- Top of the World (TOW) Club (Bldg 236)
- Fitness Center
- TV Channels: CBS, ABC, FOX, AFN, and PBS plus some movie channels, information channels and a 24-hour commander's channel (latest weather and announcements.)

### **Shipping**

Schedule tied to the limited airfield operations. (Once a week)

### **Emergency & Medical Services**

Medical services are located adjacent to the Dundas chow hall and hotel. There is no dentist residing on Thule however, a Danish dentist comes up every sixth week for one week. (Get your dental work done before you leave home!)

### **WHAT THULE DOES NOT HAVE**

Currently, Thule doesn't have or offer the following:

- ATM machine/bank (EXCEPT AT THE BX WHEN YOU MAKE PURCHASES).
- Any major fast food outlets (McDonalds, Taco Bell, Burger King, etc.)
- Amusement parks
- A clothing sales store (we now have a few items like stripes, black t-shirts, etc.)
- Paved roads or sidewalks.
- An 18-hole golf course (but we have 2ea. 9-hole courses \*\*virtual)
- A view of the —Northern Lights|| (as we are about 500 miles too far north to see them (and if/when we do see them, they are the —Southern Lights").
- Spiders or snakes!!

### **Further Information**

Contact the ESPO team Dan Chirica [[dan.chirica@nasa.gov](mailto:dan.chirica@nasa.gov)] or Kent Shiffer [[kent.c.shiffer@nasa.gov](mailto:kent.c.shiffer@nasa.gov)]